/10 cont./

867 immediately upon their return home revert to the practice ac-
579 quired in childhood -- stealing. This is of course not the fault of the school or of secondary education, but of the traditional views on this "trade," contact with which kills every other way of looking at it, as the lone wheat-stalk is smothered among the weeds that surround it.

579 In his stealing, the Abkhaz is treacherous. The best of friends, to all appearances, do not hesitate to steal from each other, and in Abkhazia it is no rare thing for brother to steal from brother, father from son, or son from father. It is almost proverbial that when an Abkhaz has no one to steal from, he robs himself. There have been instances of an Abkhaz stealing a horse from a neighbor on a dark night, taking it miles and miles away and exchanging it for another, riding back home on this fresh horse the same night, and the next morning, the minute his neighbor raised the alarm, rushing over and being the first to offer his sympathy and joining the chorus of people calling down curses on the thief and dashing off with the others in frenzied pursuit.

685 The Abkhaz thief will not admit his crime, even /11/ when
579 he could be convicted on the evidence of witnesses. When a
692 robbery case is tried at village meetings, a decision of the judge in favor of the accused is not infrequently influenced by the audacity of the latter's pretexts, by his shameless subterfuges, and by his so-called "talking circles around them." In general at such
[537] meetings, any exhibition of sly rhetoric, however shameless, on the part of a notorious thief finds not only attentive listeners but even admirers. "He saved himself by the bravery of his speech," they say in such cases.

And though such "eloquence" on the part of the thief often saves the guilty one from punishment, the victim, understandably, does not believe in his innocence and tries to get back at him at the proper moment for his losses, according to the formula of an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.

682 At present vengeance for spilled blood is on the wane, but at one time it was one of the most important features of Abkhaz life. The custom of blood-revenge puts the relatives of a person

/18 cont./

428 (eits'bshakhu /see foreign text/). After the settlement for seniority and minority, all that is left is divided equally among the brothers; in addition, the youngest receives the father's house, yard, etc. Sisters receive less than brothers.

593 Kind and affable in public, the Abkhaz at home is rather stern, imperious, and so taciturn that it is as if he were too lazy, or at any rate not sufficiently inclined, to spare a single kind or friendly word for the members of his household. The Abkhaz woman enjoys a great deal of freedom. She is no less busy than 562 462 the man; for instance, she carries the maize to the mill herself, and in some places she grinds it herself with a hand mill. In summer, she works, hoe in hand, side by side with the man in the maize-field. The wives of the members of the higher classes [565] toil no less than their husbands, but, on the other hand, they enjoy more freedom and are held more in esteem than is the case otherwise.

562 A woman is treated with respect and esteem by young and old. Women attend community meetings, mourning rites, [535] funeral banquets; they are present at the gatherings of the men and dance with them. There have been instances of women [579] being the leaders of the abragi in night raids. Women perform religious rites and ceremonies. But with all this, the Abkhaz woman is expected to be innocent and modest, and to speak to older men politely and courteously.

562 If her husband divorces her without sufficient reason, the 586 Abkhaz woman has the right to appear at the village meeting and [692] defend herself. And she skillfully uses this right: she goes to the meeting with as much determination as her husband, and defends herself with great eloquence. While the husband can divorce his wife on various grounds, she can do the same to her husband if he has done her any wrong.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdzVibzha

778 is that the Ilori " icon " is omnipotent, and they, therefore, try hard not to incur its wrath. It is inflexibly just and punishes harshly those who deviate from the law; it is a goddess of equity, as it were; a 778 kind of Themis, and in the practical life of the southern Abkhasians 629 and of the Samurzaqanoans, there is, therefore, no " saint ", no [690] " icon ", no deity equal to the Ilori " icon "; it determines finally and irrevocably all matters, whether civil or criminal, which the crown court has not been able to settle to the satisfaction of the popular idea of fair play. Even in the case of matters upon which judgment has been passed by crown courts, but where the decision has not satisfied the disputing parties, appeal is made to its tribunal. The trial is conducted as follows: A kind of arbitration court is set up which imposes upon [782] the accused the obligation to take a propitiatory oath before the Ilori " icon ". If the matter is unimportant it is determined by a village tribunal which provides one or two co-swearers; but if the matter is serious (insult to one's honour, murder, etc.) the representatives of the parties participate in the trial with the judges. " Swearing in " follows, but the number of co-swearers increases; thus, for instance, 1–2 *t'avadi-s*, 2–3 *aznauri-s*, 5–6 peasants, 1–2 namesakes, 1–2 maternal relations, 1–2 relations of the female line of the *gvari*, etc., are frequently appointed as co-swearers. The oath is administered on *Wednesdays* and *Fridays*. The accused swears before the icon that he is innocent, the co-swearers confirm his declaration, and there the matter ends. If the accused is unable to take the oath, he submits obediently to the punishment imposed upon him. From the day of the taking of the oath onwards the plaintiff breaks off all relationship with the defendant and his co-swearers. " The icon is between us (parts, separates us)," says the orthodox Abkhaz. It is impossible to evade this custom; it is an Abkhasian's profound conviction that infringement of this custom (the re-establishment of relationship), as also [696] a false oath, will not pass unpunished; the " icon " punishes with [653] sickness and even with death, if the accused does not come to his senses in time and confess himself in the wrong. At the death of all the members of the guilty family, the wrath of the " icon " recoils on the plaintiff. To avert the chastisement of the " icon ", as of Abkhasian gods in general, the guilty person must pray and make offerings to the " icon "; he must also compensate his opponent's material losses and obtain the latter's consent thereto; they both set out for Ilori with gifts, prescribed by sorceresses, and they pray there to the " icon " for forgiveness of their sins; they bring goats, bullocks, and money. This is called the reciprocal forgiveness-prayer (*cyba-nbhwara*). From this day normal relations are restored between the parties. If one of the parties does not agree to make peace, the other party can *akhs-dchokhòra*, " buy back his head," i.e. redeem